

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 023190

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FM SECSTATE WASHDC

TO AMCONSUL FRANKFURT PRIORITY

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FOLLOWING REPEAT ATHENS 830 ACTION SECSTATE 30 JANUARY.

QUOTE

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE ATHENS 830

EO 11652: NA

TAGS: OGEN AEMR GR

SUBJECT: GAO AUDIT

REF: FRANKFURT 590

1. WE UNDERSTAND GAO REVIEW OF CONSULAR POLICIES, PROCEDURES, AND FUNCTIONS TO ASSIST US CITIZENS DURING EMERGENCIES, SCHEDULED TAKE PLACE ATHENS FEB 10-21 WILL INCLUDE POSSIBLE QUESTIONING OF PRIVATE US CITIZEN RESIDENTS OF AREA AND US CITIZEN TOURISTS TO ASCERTAIN THEIR AWARENESS AND/OR UNDERSTANDING OF EMBASSY PLANS AND PROCEDURES FOR US CITIZENS DURING EMERGENCIES.

2. SUCH QUESTIONING BY GAO PERSONNEL IS BOUND TO COME TO THE ATTENTION OF THEIR COUNTRY'S RECENTLY UNFETTERED, HIGHLY EXCITABLE PRESS, AND IS EQUALLY CERTAIN TO BE EITHER MALICIOUSLY OR INNOCENTLY (DEPENDING ON THE POLITICAL ORIENTATION OF INDIVIDUAL NEWSPAPERS)

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PAGE 02 STATE 023190

MISCONSTRUED AS BEING EVIDENCE THAT EMBASSY ANTICIPATES

CRISIS AND POSSIBLE EVACUATION. A CONCRETE EXAMPLE OF JUST THIS TOOK PLACE HERE ONLY LAST WEEK WHEN A COMMUNIST NEWSPAPER PUBLISHED A COMPLETELY UNFOUNDED REPORT THAT THE AMEMBASSY ATHENS HAD ISSUED INSTRUCTIONS THAT AMERI SHOULD REPORT THEIR MENTS TO THE EMBASSY AND SHOULD REMAIN IN ATHENS SINCE THE WORSENING OF GREEK-TURKISH RELATIONS MIGHT SOON LEAD TO EVACUATION OF AMERICANS. OTHER NEWSPAPERS PICKED UP THE STORY AND QUOTED IT, AND THE EMBASSY WAS QUICKLY DELUGED WITH CALLS FROM ANXIOUS AMERICANS AND GREEKS ALIKE, TO WHOM IT WAS THEN NECESSARY TO EXPLAIN THAT THE STORY WAS ABSOLUTLY FALSE AND THAT THE EMBASSY HAD ISSUED NO INSTRUCTIONS OR INFORMATION WHATEVER TO US CITIZENS IN GREECE. IN VIEW OF WHAT HAPPENED LAST WEEK, THE MIND BOGGLES AT THE PRESS TREATMENT WHICH MIGHT ENSUE OF IT IS LEARNED THAT AN AMERICAN GOVT DELEGATION IS GOING AROUND QUERYING US CITIZENS ABOUT EVACUATION PLANS.

3. WE WILL BE GLAD TO COOPERATE WITH VISITING GAO PERSONNEL IN EXAMINATION OF OUR EMERGENCY AND EVACUATION PLANNING, PROCEDURES, AND FACILITIES, BUT WE FEEL THAT THIS IS NOT THE TIME TO DISCUSS THIS SUBJECT IN GREECE WITH PRIVATE US CITIZENS OR OUTSIDE THE CONFINES OF THE EMBASSY. RECOMMEND DEPT DISCUSS FOREGOING WITH GAO WITH AIM OF MODIFYING GAO TEAM'S INSTRUCTIONS.
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